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## Why President Trump?

So Donald Trump has made it all the way to the White House supported by, among others, the Klu Klux Klan and Alt-Reich the political hub for fascists and extreme survivalists. And why the support for a campaign based on hate, fear and conspiracy theories? Why, in particular, did so many *working-class* Americans fall for his racist, bombastic, bullyboy ranting?

US governments have pursued a policy of expanding their Free Trade Zones for some decades now, driven by the '*free trade*' dogma which claims that the free flow of capital and labour creates the most efficient economic conditions for creating wealth and prosperity. They first expanded to include Mexico as part of the Zone with no border tariffs. The result, as predicted by the trade unions, was that many manufacturers closed down their US plants and moved to south of the border where they were free of trade union "*restrictive agreements*", health and safety regulations, and US taxes and of course labour rates were cheaper!

In an article in NEW POLITICS (winter 2010, Vol: XII – 4), an academic, Dan La Botz wrote of the decline of the industrial worker in the

*The industrial worker core had been declining for some time, a result of both new technology and offshoring, and now its decline became precipitous. The statistics tell the story. In 1960 out of a total non-farm workforce of 54,274,000, there were 15,687,000 manufacturing workers representing 29 percent of the total. By 2009 out of a total of 134,333,000 non-farm workers, there were only 12,640,000 manufacturing, representing just 9 percent of the total. That is, manufacturing workers fell in the last fifty years from almost one-third of all workers to less than 10 percent*

And he went on to say:

Manufacturing workers, especially those in heavy industries such as steel, auto, rubber, glass, and electrical industries, had been among the most highly unionized workers in the country. Such industrial workers often had higher wages than other workers such as those in professions like teaching, in health care, or in services. The industrial shakeouts and manufacturing relocation to the South or offshore devastated the unions, reducing union density and weakening union power.

In 1973, 38.8 percent of manufacturing workers were in unions; by 1979 that percentage had fallen to 32.3; by 1990 it was only 20.6 percent; and by 1995 just 17.6 percent.

<http://newpolitics.mayfirst.org/fromthearchives?nid=179>

Twenty years later the Bureau of Labour Statistics gave the figure of 9.7% as the number of manufacturing workers

in unions. Organised labour declined and so did the number of days lost due to strikes. Employers told workers either to take wage cuts or the firms would re-locate abroad.  
(<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/union2.pdf>).

Another result – the law of unintended consequences - was that towns and cities across the US were hit by massive unemployment and the ruin of the local economy. Shops and so on closed down as their customers either moved away or if stuck and living on '*welfare/dole*' money, had very little by way of spending money. At the same time local councils lost a lot of revenue due to the closure of so many businesses and the loss of a lot of their population base. During the last economic depression some unemployed workers were forced to live in cars and vans and to create tent cities not seen since the 1930's.

All these factors have contributed to the disaster in towns like Flint after General Motors and other car companies moved away. Later manufacturers moved their operations again and again to other countries, mainly Asia, always looking for where labour costs were lowest.

A similar process has taken place in the UK. Northern textile manufacturers closed down their plants and exported their machinery to new businesses in various Asian countries. These companies moved again and again to wherever labour was cheapest, never staying put very long it seemed.

That also worked in another direction: foreign firms were encouraged to set up in depressed areas of the UK - e.g. Mittal, Tata, Japanese car firms, and in Northern Ireland De Lorean cars - bribed with Treasury sweetheart deals such as tax holiday agreements. Likewise in Eire, where Dublin was so attractive to many multinationals, looking for offshore tax havens for their Treasury operations, and so a huge financial services industry grew up in that part of Dublin.

The whole '*globalization*' issue was driven by capitalists determined to hunt out the cheapest possible labour costs, driving down labour rates and union demands by force of competition: London workers are now competing with workers in Dacca, Burma, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines and China. The downward pressure on wage rates is partly due to historic differences in the cost of living and in living standards, but also there is the huge amount of new labour entering the labour market as so many Chinese peasants have entered the labour market in great numbers.

Is protectionism the answer as Trump asserts or uses as political rhetoric to gain working class support? Protection is in effect the state support of one industry at the expense of those who pay for the whole cost of administration, that is the capitalist class. Protection by way of tariffs or subsidies cannot in the long-run overcome the world conditions governing the whole mass of a country's trade, nor would it improve the position of the working class. Neither free trade nor protectionism can meet the interest of the working class. They are just two sides of the same capitalist coin.

Unemployment is a world-wide phenomenon and can only be understood in the context of capitalism, the trade cycle, capitalist competition and the world market. And it is a social system driven by a class struggle between those who own the means of production and distribution and those who do not. The problem for the working class is that there is a vast pool of workers, skilled and unskilled that the capitalist class can tap into. Class power allows capitalist to do this; to hire when it is profitable and to fire when it is not; to import cheap labour or go where cheap labour exists.

The working class is a world-wide working class lacking in socialist understanding and prey to snake-oil politicians like Trump. He will not be able to solve the problems facing the US working class any more than Clinton or Obama or any number of Bushes could. Workers have to show class solidarity and recognise that only the establishment of socialism will solve the problems they face. Workers have the numbers, and the conscious and political means to take power away from the capitalist class. Socialism should be the answer to the Trump's, Sanders and Clintons of this world.

The support Trump received to become President was driven by a fear of what capitalism is doing to the workers' lives and a mis-guided hatred towards those a Trump-voting working class believed are responsible – immigrants, China, Liberals and the Federal State.

Conspiracy theories, political correctness “*gone mad*” and unseen powers pulling political strings add to this heady brew of infantile politics which cries out “*USA!USA!USA!*” while draping their minds and blind-folding their eyes with the Stars and Stripes. Such a world-view of political ignorance and blind-faith in leaders will only benefit the conservatives and the fascists applauding from the lawn of the White House (incidentally built by slave labour), Donald Trump’s acceptance speech of the Presidency of the United States of America.

## THE BAKER’S CUPCAKES

*A baker spends all day making cupcakes. In the evening she sits down with a billionaire, a journalist and an immigrant to eat the cupcakes she has made. The billionaire takes nine cupcakes and gives one to the journalist leaving a few crumbs. The baker complains that she has no cake, only a few crumbs. The journalist tells the baker that the reason she has no cupcakes is that it is all the fault of the immigrant.*

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# Capitalism and the Elderly

## Talking About My Generation

“*I want to die before I get old*” sang Roger Daltrey of the WHO. Two of the band’s members got their wishes but for the surviving members of the group it has not been such a drag getting old. Cushioned by millions from royalties and income from investment portfolios, Roger Daltrey (whose wealth stands at \$60m) and Peter Townsend (whose wealth is given by Forbes as \$105m) both lead very comfortable lives in old age.

When politicians, economists and the media question the elderly for having “*lucrative*” occupational pensions and private houses they do not mean the rich, like the surviving members of the WHO. Instead, the political target is those redundant workers who are drawing state pensions and other benefits but have other assets to draw upon. The question of the elderly and how they live is not a generational issue but a class one.

If Dean Swift was alive today, he might have written a pamphlet on the elderly along the lines he did with his satire A MODEST PROPOSAL (1729). Swift satirically concluded that the best policy for solving the problem of the Irish poor in his day was for the parents to sell their children to the rich ladies and gentlemen to eat. Well, he might add, the solution for the problems of the elderly is for the government to give money to their children to buy their parents a one-way plane ticket to Zurich. Infanticide or Geriatricide; what is the difference if it gets the poor off the backs of the rich?

Satire apart, the elderly are a real and pressing problem for the government. 10 million people in the UK are over 65 years old. The latest projections are for 5½ million more elderly people in 20 years’ time and the number will have nearly doubled to around 19 million by 2050.

Much of today’s public spending on benefits is focussed on elderly people. 65% of Department for Work and Pensions benefit expenditure goes to those over working age, equivalent to £100 billion in 2010/11 or one-seventh of public expenditure. Continuing to provide state benefits and pensions at today’s average would mean additional spending of £10 billion a year for every additional one million people over working age. (<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/>).

This money comes from taxation whose burden falls on the shoulder of the capitalist class. Capitalists would like nothing more than to get rid of this burden and to re-invest more capital to make more and more money. That, after all, is what capitalism is all about. It is not about meeting human need, whether a person is young or old. Profit is everything.

Not that the working class elderly live well. They don’t. According to Age UK, just over a million people have a need for care but receive no help from the state.

And the government's recent refusal to cap care costs means that many elderly people will have to sell their homes in order to pay for care.

The elderly looking for care homes because they are too frail, ill and confused, are to become the new paupers of the 21st century. That is if they can find care homes. Many care firm businesses are on the verge of bankruptcy. An analysis by accountancy firm Moore Stephens found 47 care home operators became insolvent in 2014/15, up from 40 the previous year and 35 in 2012/13.

. (<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2016/04/26/rise-care-homes-going-bust>)

In 2011 Age UK produced a report LIVING ON A LOW INCOME IN LATER LIFE, which noted, for instance, that many elderly people '*went without holidays, stopped going out, did not replace household goods, and some took drastic action to reduce their heating and energy costs.*' Six years later this is still the case.

Another Age UK report in 2014 stated that 1.6 million pensioners are living below the poverty line. More than 1 million elderly people are left to struggle by each day without any support. Two years later another report by the same organisation stated that spending on services like home carers, meals on wheels, and day care has dropped by more than £1 billion in the last five years.

Spending more and more on the elderly will not wash with politicians. They have to administer capitalism and the interests of the capitalist class. And this imperative operates as a barrier against the social reformism entertained by the social reformers. The problem with social reformism is that capitalism has a history of enacting reforms one minute and taking them away the next. Social reforms do not tackle the real capitalist cause of these problems and can only act as mere palliatives. The reality is that capitalism can never be run in the interest of the working class, young or old.

What politicians can do, though, is divide the working class and undermine necessary class unity. Politicians can play the blame game. They can say to younger workers that the elderly are living in a geriatric utopia. Politicians who want to take back reforms and to make the elderly pay more and more for health care or reduce state pensions walk a well-trodden route by pitting one section of the working class against another.

Politicians already do it with immigrants and the "*undeserving poor*". A drip-drip feed of hateful and spiteful poison into the working class on an almost daily basis from the media and party conferences sees to that. Now, it is hoped, the elderly will be blamed and resented by the young without capitalism being questioned.

So it comes as no surprise to come across a prime-time BBC programme, TIME TO BREAK PROMISES TO PENSIONERS (4 October 2016) written by Paul Johnson, the director of the Institute of Fiscal Studies. The BBC conveniently did not allow any response from the passive audience taking in this propaganda. Socialists were denied the opportunity to comment.

According to Paul Johnson the elderly have never had it so good, particularly the 'baby boomer, generations; those born in the mid-1940's and mid-1960's. He claimed that this "*privileged*" section of the working class enjoyed improved life expectancy and higher income and wealth.

Johnson then said that the generations coming up behind are less well-off. He pointed out that:

- \* Earnings are stagnating: many workers report not having had a pay increase in 15 years.
- \* Homeownership rates have collapsed: first-time buyers are older now than 10-20 years ago.
- \* No occupational pensions and saving is impossible with casual, insecure jobs.

Johnson's conclusion was that the older generation has more wealth at the expense of the younger generation and this had to change. He did not say that the richest 1% own more wealth than the bottom 55% (GUARDIAN, 15th May 2014). He did not highlight the vast wealth held by the capitalist class. He did not say that it is the working class who produce all the social wealth, a large proportion of which goes in unearned income to the capitalist class in the form of rent, interest and profit. Blame the elderly and make them pay more: all very convenient for politicians

wanting to cut budgets.

What is not questioned is capitalism. The problems facing young workers do not derive from the elderly. Instead the problems facing the working class as a whole derive from workers not owning the means of production and distribution. As a class, workers always suffer from poor and inadequate housing, not because of elderly workers, but because workers' wages often cannot pay the deposit for a mortgage to buy houses or even to pay for rented accommodation.

And another important factor missing from Johnson's programme is that workers are constantly engaged in a class struggle with employers over pay and working conditions. In the current economic climate employers have the economic edge, giving little or no increase in wages and salaries.

The problem for workers is capitalism and commodity production and exchange for profit. It is not other workers. As we have seen from charities like Age UK, the working class elderly suffer from: -

- \* Poor health care
- \* Loneliness
- \* Inability to afford to repair or heat homes
- \* High cost of residential care
- \* No adaptations of homes to meet their changing needs when getting older

Again, this poverty is not the result of an uncaring government of "*evil Tories*" but capitalism. The Labour Party, if and when they get into power, will also have to make "*difficult choices*".

They will have to ensure the profitability of British capitalism against competitors. And if this means abandoning "*pledges*" or withdrawing reforms then so be it; the Labour Party has form.

To pay for the Korean War the Labour government introduced charges on NHS dental treatment and spectacles while in 1968 Roy Jenkins, as Chancellor of the Exchequer reimposed prescription charges. When faced with the problems of capitalism all governments behave more or less the same.

In capitalism, the needs and interests of the capitalist class come first. Capitalism is all about making profit not meeting human needs from the cradle to the grave.

This will not be the case in socialism. In socialism the elderly will be cared for as valuable members of the community, not as redundant workers to be blamed or forgotten. In contrast to the self-interest of the rich under capitalism, socialism will adhere to the principle "*from each according to abilities to each according to needs*" And one of those needs will be a decent and inclusive life in old age.

## WHAT SOCIALISM MEANS

Socialism is the only system within which the problems which now face the workers can be solved; but what will it be like? Socialism is a system in which the means for producing and distributing wealth will be owned by society as a whole. Under capitalism the land, factories, offices, mines, railways and other instruments of production are monopolised by a section of society only., who this form a privileged class. Socialism will end this, for, with the means of life owned in common by the entire community it will be a classless society in which the exploitation and oppression of man by man will have been abolished. All human beings will be social equals, free to run social affairs as they think fit.

Today we cannot describe in detail daily life in a socialist society. Some writers have tried to paint a picture of what life could, or should be like, but it is a matter of opinion how successful they were. Drawing up a detailed blueprint for socialism is premature, since the exact forms will depend upon the technical conditions and preferences of those who set up and live in socialism. The Socialist Party of Great Britain has always refused to play the futile game of constructing blue-prints of future society but we can broadly define the essential features of socialism.



# Faith-based Economics

In 1967 there were protests throughout the US against the war in Vietnam. In October that year, organisers from Mobe - the National Mobilisation Committee to End the War in Vietnam - called for a march on Washington. As part of the protest, two political activists, Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, planned to exorcise and levitate the Pentagon by invoking an ancient Aramaic ritual.

That day, over 50,000 attended the anti-war protests. After the protests had finished about half the crowd marched over the Memorial Bridge to the Pentagon guarded by the army and the National Guard. Several hundred people - led by Abbie Hoffman and Allen Ginsberg - started chanting and singing. As Time Magazine explained at the time:

*[By] chanting ancient Aramaic exorcism rites while standing in a circle around the building, they could get it to rise into the air, turn orange and vibrate until all evil emissions had fled. The war would end forthwith.*

The Pentagon did not move and the war in Vietnam continued for another six years. Chanting an ancient Aramaic exorcism rite achieved nothing. While Ginsberg's generation, despite their energy and political activism "... *passed through universities with radiant cool eyes hallucinating Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy among the scholars of war*" (The Howl), changed nothing, capitalism and its wars have persisted from one generation to the next.

If levitating the Pentagon proved a futile act of folly back in 1967, so too has the current *penchant* for sections of the pro- Brexit and EU Remainers to use faith-based economics in an attempt to either "*talk up*" or "*talk down*" the economy.

It has been amusing to watch the pro-Brexit media, daily apply a faith-based economics to "*talk-up*" the economy. They really do believe that all you have to do is constantly repeat that the economy is booming, that British capitalism is on the rise and that all is grand and dandy in the markets and then the economy will somehow blossom and bloom.

And some even assert that they have God on their side. When Theresa May is kept awake at night thinking about Brexit she takes comfort in her Christian faith. Prayer and her religious belief inform her politics and economic thinking (THE SUNDAY TIMES, November 27th 2016).

The Brexiteers also believe the reverse is true. At least they are consistent in their economic idiocy. If the economy can be "*talked-up*", they surmise, then it can also be "*talked down*" by their enemies, the Remainers.

So, they bitterly complain when economic statisticians, like the Office for Budget Responsibility (whose track record on economic predictions is lamentable) or journalists such as the Keynesian, Will Hutton, "*talk down*" the economy. They become agitated and alarmed that this economic negativity will cause the economy to nose-dive, the pound to fall and business confidence to collapse. So hysterical have the Brexiteers become that negative criticism of the economy is denounced as treachery. Economic treason, if you like.

A similar, but equally foolish, faith-based economics is pursued by the Remainers who hope the economy, post Brexit, will be so dire and painful that they can say to those who voted to leave the EU and sneer: "*we told you so*". They want Brexit to become apparent in higher prices, squeezed incomes and deeper austerity. A constant stream of negative articles and statistics is produced, on an almost daily basis, by the pro-EU enthusiasts in an attempt to "*talk the economy down*

". The movement of the economy from boom to bust and from bust to boom is not dependent on religion, the psychological disposition of economic actors or the fatalism of Kondratiev waves oscillating through human history.

Economic crises occur because of the contradictions inherent in the anarchy of commodity production and exchange for profit.

Faith-based economics is as baseless as chanting Aramaic rituals to levitate the Pentagon. This is not to say that capitalists don't need confidence to invest. They do. Capitalists only invest when they believe they are going to make a profit. However, capitalists do not need recourse to a faith-based economics to know when to invest and when to employ and exploit the working class.

As Marx noted:

*...capitalist production moves through certain periodical cycles. It moves through a state of quiescence, growing animation, prosperity, overtrade, crisis and stagnation. (Wages, Price and Profit in SELECTED WORKS, Volume 1, p. 440)*

Capitalism generates periodic economic crises through contradiction. Marx explained why this is the case in the third volume of CAPITAL. He wrote:

*From time to time the conflict of antagonistic agencies finds vent in crises. The crises are always but momentary and forcible solutions of the existing contradictions. They are violent eruptions which for a time restore the disturbed equilibrium. (CAPITAL VOLUME III, Ch. XV, p. 249).*

Capitalism has the capacity to produce vast social wealth simultaneously with poverty; the freedom for capital to move across the world alongside wage slavery for the majority imprisoned within national boundaries; sophisticated robotic factories producing commodities but with human labour dehumanised as a mere appendage to the machine; and the deliberate prevention of the forces of production from being used to meet the needs of everyone even though a world of abundance is possible.

Workers should ignore the faith-based economics of either the Brexit supporters “*talking-up*” the economy of the Remainers “*talking-down*” the economy. It can't be done. Just as the Vietnam War protesters could not levitate the Pentagon so, but faith-based will, the economy takes no notice of the Brexiteers and Remainers.

And in any event the working class has no interest in the EU or outside the EU just as they have no interest in questions of free trade or protectionism, a single market, a free market-zone, sovereignty and all the other minutiae capitalist politicians have to deliberate about on behalf of the capitalist class.

Instead, workers should realise that there is a practical and reasonable alternative to capitalism, that is, the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society. The conscious, political and democratic movement to establish socialism is the only force capable of ending war, and the social and economic consequences of the anarchy of commodity production and exchange for profit.

### MARX ON MONEY

*Money, then, appears as this distorting power both against the individual and against the bonds of society, etc., which claim to be entities in themselves. It transforms fidelity into infidelity, love into hate, hate into love, virtue into vice, vice into virtue, servant into master, master into servant, idiocy into intelligence, and intelligence into idiocy.*

*Since money, as the existing and active concept of value, confounds and confuses all things, it is the general confounding and confusing of all things – the world upside-down – the confounding and confusing of all natural and human qualities.*

*He who can buy bravery is brave, though he be a coward. As money is not exchanged for any one specific quality, for any one specific thing, or for any particular human essential power, but for the entire objective world of man and nature, from the standpoint of its possessor it therefore serves to exchange every quality for every other, even contradictory, quality and object: it is the fraternisation of impossibilities. It makes contradictions embrace.*

[www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/power.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/power.htm)

# Socialism: A World without Money

## Organising Production and Distribution without Money

Can a social system function efficiently without the use of money? Socialists argue that it can. A social system based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society would meet the social needs of society without the use of money. Production and distribution would take place solely and directly to meet human needs. There would be no exchange, no money and no buying and selling of commodities or exploitation by the minority capitalist class of the majority.

When socialists put the socialist proposition to workers that a social system can be organised rationally and efficiently without the need for money and the buying and selling of commodities there is a misplaced incredulity. Socialists are told that there has always been money and is as natural as drinking water or breathing air. The economists go further. They say that a social system without money, markets and private property would not get off the ground. A socialist alternative, they say, is just idle speculation, mere utopianism.

However, there never seems to be enough money today for everyone. Money is not a problem for the top 1% of the population who have so much disposable cash the world is their oyster. For those who do not have enough money to live on, life is hard, oppressive and difficult. For the lack of money there is a housing crisis and the inability of workers to buy homes in which to live. For millions of men, women and children, the lack of money means starvation and death.

Money is a form of rationing. What workers get as wages and salaries only buys sufficient commodities to produce and reproduce themselves as a working class. Most of what workers need to buy with money is way beyond their means.

Money may make the world go round as Liza Minnelli and Joel Grey cynically sang in CABARET, but it is a world in which most of the money is amassed by the capitalist class to the exclusion of everyone else. Yes, under capitalism money does define someone; it defines someone either as a capitalist or a worker. And under capitalism money defines the workers as a class of wage slaves.

## Economics and Money

Unlike most workers, economists exist to defend the capitalist class and their system; they are not interested in a socialist alternative to class exploitation, profit-making and the enrichment of a minority class of capitalists.

Workers, though, should be interested in a socialist alternative. They should be interested in establishing a social system that does work in their interests and does set out to meet their social needs. And this means not thinking as though capitalism has always existed and always will exist. It means thinking historically and in terms of social systems; social systems that preceded capitalism and a social system that will replace capitalism; socialism.

Economists do not practice economics within a historical context. They do not structure their subject matter within social systems. Capital and money are uncritically taken as a “*natural*” state of affairs. They erroneously believe that exchange is a necessary characteristic of all social systems. They cannot even conceive of a social system without the need for barter let alone the use of money. As Marx wrote against the economists of his own day:

*They all maintain that competition, monopoly, etc., are, in principle—i.e. regarded as abstract thoughts—the only basis for existence, but leave a great deal to be desired in practice. What they all want is competition without the pernicious consequences of competition. They all want the impossible, i.e. the conditions of bourgeois existence without the necessary consequences of those conditions. They all fail to understand that the bourgeois form of*



*production is an historical and transitory form, just as was the feudal form. This mistake is due to the fact that, to them, bourgeois man is the only possible basis for any society, and that they cannot envisage a state of society in which man will have ceased to be bourgeois.*  
(Marx to P. V. Annikov, Letters, 1846). [http://marxists.anu.edu.au/archive/marx/works/1846/letters/46\\_12\\_28.htm](http://marxists.anu.edu.au/archive/marx/works/1846/letters/46_12_28.htm)

And the economist's false thinking about exchange derives from an error found in the WEALTH OF NATIONS (1776) written by Adam Smith.

Smith claimed that men and women have an innate "*propensity to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another*" (Book 1, Chapter 2). To be human, said Smith, is to buy and sell. At least it has his name on it, the online version didn't. Shared to EAF, anyone know him? And not only has this been the case in the past, he went on to say, but it always will be the case well into the future. Smith believed that it is in the nature of human beings to economically behave in this way. Human nature cannot be changed. Human nature is fixed and immutable. History tells us otherwise.

## **There is a Practical Socialist Alternative to Capitalism**

Today, workers are also told that when people do try to impose a social system not based on "*human nature*" the result is bureaucracy, dictatorship, gulags, firing squads and totalitarianism. As if the period stretching from the publication of the WEALTH OF NATIONS, with its slavery and abject working class poverty, to the start of the Russian Revolution in 1917, was a veritable Garden of Eden. Yet, from the position of the working class there was no difference from being exploited in state capitalist Russia as it was in Britain or the US. Bolshevik Russia had money and exchange. It was not socialism.

To answer the economists working within the straitjacket of Smith's view of human behaviour requires workers to think in terms of social systems. There have not always been workers and capitalists, labour markets, the buying and selling of labour power and generalised wages and salaries defining a whole class. Yes, for a social system like capitalism money is important, but only because the product of labour is privately owned. And this has not always been the case.

Marx showed in the first chapters of CAPITAL that in simple commodity production, the commodity is directly owned by the individual and is sold to purchase commodities for their immediate use. This is not the case with capitalism. In capitalism an exploited working class produces commodities for a wage and a salary which are then owned by capitalists who then sell these commodities on the market for a profit.

We therefore have two different types of exchange suited to two different social systems at particular levels of production in human history. A feudal system would have property relations and commodity exchange peculiar to the historical level it had reached. Capitalism, on the other hand, with its complex process of buying and selling, advertising, credit and so on, has property relations and a form of exchange peculiar to its own historical development.

Not all social systems are the same. Different social systems have had different social characteristics. A barter economy was a very basic social system in which families produced as much as they could for themselves in order to minimise having to sell. Production levels were low and human existence at a subsistence level. A chattel slave economy was also be a different type of social system. What slaves produced belonged to their owners although the slaves were fed and housed to produce and reproduce their condition of slavery. In chattel slavery production conditions were largely agricultural not industrial.

And there have been communities where there has been no barter, no money and no exchange. The Awa people, also known as the Guaja, are an endangered, indigenous tribal group of hunter-gatherers in the Amazon. They stand in the way of logging companies and land clearance for farming and have been hunted to death. Only 350 remain alive today. They don't use any system of money or barter at all, but live completely off the land. Such a social system Marx and Engels wrote of as "*primitive communism*" which pre-dated class society and class exploitation. Socialists do not want to go back to any of these societies. There is no need. It is just that the development in the forces of

production means socialism/communism is possible now. We illustrate examples of primitive communism because it shows that money and barter have not always existed and it is not innate to “*truck, barter and exchange*”.

Marx drew attention to different social systems and why they changed. In a famous passage, he pointed out:

*Social relations are closely bound up with productive forces. In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations. The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill society with the individual capitalist.*

(THE POVERTY OF PHILOSOPHY, Chapter 2, Collected Works, Vol. 6, p.166)

Some superficial readers of Marx believe he advocated an economic determinism where one social system is replaced by another only through technological change rather than by human agency. This ignores Marx’s opening sentence where he stated that social relations are “*closely bound up with productive forces*”. The productive forces also contain co-operative and social labour. And it also ignores the second sentence where he stated that men and women change their mode of production and thereby change themselves. Hardly the ideas and beliefs held by an economic determinist.

Similarly, Engels argued:

*...the final cause of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men’s brains....but in changes in the modes of production and exchange. They are to be sought not in the philosophy, but in the economics of each particular epoch.*

(Socialism: Utopian and Scientific, SELECTED WORKS, p. 136)

Equally for Engels as for Marx, the change from one social system to another is revolutionary and made by the actions of men and women. History does nothing. It is men and women who make history.

## **Socialism: A World without Money**

This brings us on to the question of socialism. Socialism is a social system that has never existed. In socialism there will be no property; that is, private, corporate or state property ownership. Common property ownership means no property ownership acting as a barrier to take freely what people need in order to live worthwhile lives and to take part in the democratic affairs of society. There will be no private property relations, no buying and selling, no exchange and no markets. As a consequence of there being no exchange in socialism there will be no money.

The establishment of socialism is not grounded in the interest of the capitalist class but the working class. Economists structure their theory of economics with a defence of capitalism and the capitalist class. Marx and socialists after him began their critique of capitalism from the starting point of the buying and selling of the commodity labour power, the exploitation of the working class within the productive process and the enforced rationing caused by the wages system and wage slavery. The forces of production have developed to such a level that not only could men and women directly participate in production and distribution of goods and services but they could also have direct access to what has been produced.

In socialism where society has freed itself from property and exchange relationships, there will be no social barrier impeding the development of the forces of production directly to meet human need. There will be, of course, considerations around maintaining levels of raw resources and environmental factors but there will not be inadequate housing, food, clothes, health, transport and education. In other words, socialism will be a social system of abundance not one of deliberate scarcity.

Economists cannot conceive a future socialist society freed from the dead-hand of capital because mentally they are locked within Adam Smith’s economic strait jacket which theoretically accepts, without criticism, his fiction of innate and fixed human economic behaviour.

# Money will have no function in socialism

Money will have no function in socialism. Yet the economists still claim that money carries a role no sophisticated social system could be without. Under capitalism money not only acts as a medium of exchange but also as a store of wealth and a unit of account. Money is not only used for immediate exchange but exchange in the future. However, in both cases socialism would still be able to function without money. Socialist production and distribution will meet social needs on a daily basis wherever these needs exist and plan and store for needs in the future whatever they happen to be.

What about money as a unit of account? Under capitalism, money as a unit of account is useful to individual capitalists and to the capitalist state and its statisticians. Individual capitalists can assess the production process over time against investment. Government statisticians can use money as a unit of account to assess a range of economies in the aggregate over a range of industrial and commercial sectors of the economy.

However, a socialist society is not tied to this form of measurement of production. There is no need for a system of prices to act as a framework to efficiently guide production and distribution in a socialist society. The production and distribution of goods and services can be rationally assessed by reference to energy use, labour inputs, health and safety considerations, impact on the environment, time and energy use and so on. A socialist society just will not need a system of price information to make informed, efficient and rational choices over the range of production and distribution techniques and alternatives to meet the needs of a socialist society. A price mechanism might be a necessary system to ensure efficient use of capital investment but the concept of efficiency in socialism will not be the market driven “efficiency” found in capitalism. Efficiency in socialism will be determined by successfully meeting human needs not adequate returns of profit on capital investment.

Economists also tell us that the price system serves as a system of communication over markets. It allows capitalists to sell their commodities to whoever wants to buy them no matter where they happen to live.

A price system allows capitalists to estimate the level of production against demand for their commodities. The price system ensures that only profitable goods are produced to buyers having the ability to pay for them. Yet this market communication periodically breaks down. Commodities are sometimes produced in industrial sectors which find no buyers and profits cannot be made. The price mechanism and the market periodically fail.

This brings us on to planning production and distribution in a socialist society. Planning does not have to be centralised but can and should be dispersed. Planners do not have to have a damp-proof membrane inserted between planning production and distribution and the rest of society. Socialist production would be regulated by people’s needs and distribution secured by free access. Stock control, computing systems, input and output analysis would all ensure planned production meets social needs.

And it is also conveniently forgotten by our opponents that socialism will not have passive consumers leading isolated lives and detached central planners holding all the information and dictating what people will and will not require. In socialism information will be transparent and democratically controlled by all of society. Drawing up plans, the process of planning and ensuring the plans are met will be active and interrelated components of a democratic social system in which a world-wide socialist majority prevails.

Advocates of the market, the price mechanism and money begin their attack on the socialist alternative from their partisan position serving the interests of the capitalist class, from their groundless assumptions about human beings and from their fictional world-view which sees no possible change in the way society organises production and distribution.

And it is a dogmatic position; a market fundamentalism that cannot contemplate any rational and practical alternative. Socialists do not have to accept any of this dogmatism. We do not deal with isolated individuals with infinite demands and innate characteristics weighted towards “*truck, barter and exchange*”. Instead, socialists work within a scientific paradigm of changing social systems, changing social relationship to the means of production and distribution and where the development of the forces of production has reached a point within human history to make

capitalism, exchange, the price mechanism, markets and money historically superfluous.

## HUMAN NATURE IS NOT A BARRIER TO SOCIALISM

Many of the people who claim that human nature is a barrier to socialism are often engaged in propagating social reforms whose purpose is to change negative human behaviour – behaviour they have told socialists is immutable and fundamental characteristics of the human condition. You cannot have it both ways. Violent and selfish human behaviour exists in a historical not a natural context. Negative human behaviour found in capitalism will not be present in a future socialist society. In socialism conflict and violence will give way to peace; competition to co-operation; exploitation and uselessness to creativity and social purpose.

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# How to Read Marx's Capital

## Reading CAPITAL

How many workers have read Marx's CAPITAL from cover to cover? Is CAPITAL the 19th century equivalent of Professor Hawking's BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME, to be bought from a bookshop and then left on the shelf unread? Is CAPITAL one of those books analogous to a swimming pool, where you put your toe in the water at the shallow end but never dive in from the deep end for fear of drowning?

Regrettably, Marx gave no instructions on how to read CAPITAL. There is no manual to help us. We are on our own.

Marx did, however write to his friend Ludwig Kugelmann, three months after the publication of CAPITAL, giving suggestions to Kugelmann's wife on how to access easier sections of CAPITAL if she was finding the first chapters too difficult. Marx wrote:

*Please be so kind as to tell your good wife that the chapters on the "Working Day", "Cooperation, Division of Labour and Machinery", and finally on "Primitive Accumulation" are the most immediately readable.'*<sup>19</sup> *'Cooperation, Division of Labour and Machinery' actually refers to material that was divided into three chapters in the later editions which are nearly always the ones read today: (13) 'Cooperation'; (14) 'Division of Labour and Manufacture'; and (15) 'Machinery and Modern Industry'. (Marx to Ludwig Kugelmann, 30 November 1867', in MECW, Vol. 42, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1987, p. 490).*

Although CAPITAL is a ground breaking critique of capitalism and of class exploitation it can also be read in other ways. Francis Wheen author of MARX'S DAS KAPITAL: A BIOGRAPHY (2006) suggested:

*...as an unfinished literary masterpiece which, with its multi-layered structure, (it) can be read as a Gothic novel, a Victorian melodrama, a Greek tragedy or a Swiftian satire. (GUARDIAN 8th July 2006).*

Just reading the footnotes provides someone with an easy way of approaching CAPITAL. There is even "MARX'S 'DAS KAPITAL' FOR BEGINNERS" by Michael Wayne with illustrations by Sungyoon Chaia (2012) which depicts chapters of CAPITAL in a cartoon style. If read alongside CAPITAL itself, the illustrated book offers an accessible path through Marx's critique of political economy and the key questions he asked; what is the commodity? Where does wealth come from? What is value and surplus value? What happens to work and to the labourer under capitalism? How are workers exploited and why do economic crises occur?

Another useful book for an understanding of CAPITAL is POLYLUXMARX edited by V Brushi, A Muzzupappa, S Nuss, S. Stecklener and S Stutzle (Monthly Press 2012). In the book, CAPITAL is presented as a series of Power-Point presentations each with detailed illustrations of Marx's ideas and a space on each page to make copious notes.

CAPITAL can also be read as part of contemporary artistic experience. At the 2015 Venice Art Biennale, art collector billionaires arriving by luxury yachts were greeted by performers reading Marx's CAPITAL set as an Oratorio composed by Isaac Julian. Imagine having to read CAPITAL every day for six months! What the *über* rich thought of having quotations from CAPITAL read out to them as they sipped their expensive champagne we were never told. One or two probably said: "*Did you say 'Commodity Fetishism'? Damn, I left my World War One gas mask at the hotel*". And a recent Turner prize winner, Duncan Campbell, used fragments of CAPITAL in his film, 'IT FOR OTHERS', where, at one point in the film, Michael Clark's dance company interprets the equations from Marx's CAPITAL as contemporary dance. The use of the equation,  $M-C...P...C'-M'$  as a break-dance choreography to explain the process of exploitation is an amazing leap of the imagination!

Unfortunately, artists like philosophers can only interpret the world in various ways, but never change it, unless becoming socialists and joining a growing socialist movement. A revolutionary eruption from Venice and London did not take place. Nor did the earth move when an anonymous dub reggae group recorded and issued an album in 1978 celebrating CAPITAL, with each track named after a key Marxian concept such as '*surplus value*'. However, it was great background music to listen to when reading books by Hugo, Dumas, Baudelaire and Balzac.

## Reading Capital Politically

CAPITAL preferably should be read politically. And a political reading of CAPITAL cannot be detached from revolutionary socialism and the historical agency that is to establish socialism - the world's working class. CAPITAL was written for a political purpose and primarily, it should be read that way.

Nevertheless, there should be no embarrassment in admitting that on a first reading (yes, there will be others) some of Marx's writings are complex and difficult to understand. It might be easier to skip the difficult passages and press on. Making notes of unfamiliar words or expressions also helps. There is secondary literature that can help too, although you are then dependent upon someone else doing the thinking for you.

Take, as an example, William Morris and how he read CAPITAL. In his pamphlet, HOW I BECAME A SOCIALIST, written in 1894, he recalled just how difficult certain parts of CAPITAL were for him:

*I put some conscience into trying to learn the economical side of Socialism, and even tackled Marx, though I must confess that, whereas I thoroughly enjoyed the historical part of Capital, I suffered agonies of confusion of the brain over reading the pure economics of that great work. Anyhow, I read what I could, and will hope that some information stuck to me from my reading; but more, I must think, from continuous conversation with such friends as Bax and Hyndman and Scheu.*

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1894/hibs/hibs.htm>

Marx was well aware that CAPITAL would prove difficult to grasp on a first reading. Morris read and re-read CAPITAL. At a recent exhibition "*Anarchy and Beauty*" held at the Portrait Gallery in London, Morris's own gold-tooled, hand-bound copy of CAPITAL (In French of course) was on display. His copy showed that he had read CAPITAL on many occasions and his copy had to be rebound because the original book had fallen into sheets of detached pages. Today Morris would have access to an on-line publication of CAPITAL written in any language he wanted to read it in. Although, is CAPITAL available in ancient Norse?

Marx had a particular readership in mind. Marx wrote CAPITAL for the working class not for the benefit of old Harrovians, academics, literary salons, art collectors and the horror film industry. And reading Marx as a socialist revolutionary is a very good position to start from.

Marx also used rich and complex metaphors to make us look at something anew. The metaphorical image of the baby bursting out of its mother's womb at the end of the chapter thirty-two, (*the historical tendency of capitalist accumulation*), brings to mind the scene from the film ALIEN where the once gestating alien baby finally bursts out of the actor, John Hurt's stomach. Socialism, a social system of free and voluntary labour, is indeed as alien as you can get when contrasted with the anti-social and degrading exploitation of the wages system. And the image of the



knell tolling for the death of capitalism and the arrival of socialism is pure Gothic horror.

## Reading CAPITAL alone or with others?

Another problem with reading CAPITAL is the difficult and unfamiliar terms used by Marx, particularly in the first three chapters of the book. Just as an example, on the first page of the first chapter, Marx presents the reader with the unfamiliar words “*use-value*”, “*value*”, “*substance of value*”, and “*magnitude of value*”. And who is there to ask when you are stuck by some of the more difficult passages in CAPITAL? It is fine to think for yourself. However, thinking for yourself also brings with it some problems particularly if the text still cannot be understood. CAPITAL reading groups is a good place to start, that is, if any CAPITAL reading groups can be found.

In the 1970's there were several student CAPITAL reading groups. Some of these reading groups were very scary and were linked back to even scarier political parties. At the time, these CAPITAL reading groups were lampooned by satirical programmes like NOT THE NINE O'CLOCK NEWS. In one sketch from the series entitled “*The Marxists*”, four students, in a sparse garret somewhere in London and surrounded by primed Molotov Cocktails, attempt to read the first paragraph from the first chapter of CAPITAL without much success. The leader of the group begins to read the opening lines but it proves to be too difficult for the would-be “*revolutionaries*” to understand, so the leader of the group tells the others to give up reading CAPITAL and instead go out and “*kill someone*”. Such was left wing student politics in the 1970's. Do not follow leaders; you do not know where they are going to lead you. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDJeTnLKLEI>).

Another alternative is to get help. Reading CAPITAL with someone else helps in tackling difficult concepts, words and passages in the text. Shortly after CAPITAL was written, secondary literature began to be written to help make reading CAPITAL easier. Under the signature of Samuel Moore, Engels, for example, an article “*Marx's Capital*” which appeared in the LEIPZIG DEMOKRATISCHES WOCHENBLATT Nos 12 and 13, in march 21 and 28, 1868). And Engels also wrote a review of CAPITAL in the FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW in June 1868 (see Frederick Engels on “CAPITAL”, International Publishers 2002).

There has also been Edward Aveling's THE STUDENT'S MARX: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF KARL MARX'S CAPITAL (1892), Karl Kautsky's book THE ECONOMIC DOCTRINES OF MARX (1887), Ben Fine's MARX'S CAPITAL (2006) and J.L. Arthur's MARX'S CAPITAL: A STUDENT EDITION (1993). There are other primers, although reading secondary literature is no substitute for reading the original. And like the Ben Fine Book the last two chapters have nothing to do with Marx's CAPITAL but everything to do with Fine's own politics.

There are also some helpful on-line readings of CAPITAL. There is the series of lectures (now collated as a book) given by David Harvey. Harvey, though, not only holds an underconsumptionist view of crises - which is definitely not Marx's view. He is also dismissive of Marx's theory of the rate of profit to fall as a contributing factor in economic crises. Another academic, Professor Andrew Kliman, also gave a recent on-line course on reading CAPITAL chapter by chapter over a number of months which had the benefit of audience participation and notice boards.

Our own recommendation would be to read or listen to anything written on Marx's CAPITAL and his economics by our late comrade, E. Hardy. In particular, there is his 1970 lecture “*Marxian Economics: the first four chapters of Capital*” in which he discusses the commodity, the process of exchange, money, and the general formula of capital.

In the lecture, Hardy gives a lucid and clear exposition of the most difficult parts of CAPITAL; and, in particular, how to explain CAPITAL to an audience who may have just started reading the book. A copy of the lecture can be obtained by contacting SOCIALIST STUDIES or by visiting our web site where an audio-recording has been embedded.

<http://www.socialiststudies.org.uk/audio.shtml>

A great many of Hardy's other lectures can be found on our website including two lectures on youtube. These lectures can be accessed by going to: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXq0kw9sU6xvrr34yezA\\_Tw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXq0kw9sU6xvrr34yezA_Tw)

# The Case for Socialism

Socialism is more than a great idea for the social problems facing the world today. Socialism means the revolutionary transformation of social relationships and the means of production and distribution – the natural resources, factories, transport and communication networks and the distribution points. In socialism production would take place directly to meet human needs:

*“from each according to their ability to each according to their needs”.*

Socialists do not celebrate “*class*”. We have no romantic attachment to the working class any more than we accept there is a middle class. We find the division of society into a minority capitalist class and a majority working class both inefficient and unnecessary.

Socialists want to see a classless society of creative and free human beings, democratically taking part in the affairs of society. Socialists want a world with no artificial boundaries, international rivalries, conflicts and wars.

Socialism will be a social system completely distinct from capitalism. To be a socialist requires wanting to change society in a revolutionary way. Socialism is not a philosophy, a set of ideas and values nor what the Labour Party does when in office. A socialist does not propose reforms, support capitalism’s wars or try to turn capitalism into something it can never be.

Socialism has to be argued for. Socialism will not just happen by itself. Socialists have to engage in politics. Socialists have to persuade their fellow workers to become socialists. We need political agency to fundamentally change capitalism to socialism and that means we need a socialist majority wanting and desiring socialism. And the more socialists there are the better. Socialism cannot be imposed by a minority. Non-socialist workers cannot be forced to accept socialism.

A socialist is also an optimist. Capitalism has failed to deliver. We live in a world of forced austerity caused, in part, by one of the worst economic crises since the 1930s. There is a persistent housing crisis which politicians cannot resolve. And workers are faced with poor health provision, poor education and a constant struggle to make ends meet.

The rich now have vast wealth. The top 1% has more wealth than the rest of the world combined, while the bottom 50% own less than 1% of all wealth (*Credit Suisse*, 2016). Why the great disparity in wealth? It is because the world’s capitalist class own the means of production and distribution?

Production does not take place to meet human need but to make profit and to accumulate capital as an anti-social objective in its own right. If this profit-motive results in poverty, death and destruction then it is just written off as collateral damage. Under capitalism, making more and more profit is everything.

However capitalism is shot-through with contradictions, crises and seemingly insolvable social, environmental and economic problems. Government policies aimed at tackling social and economic problems continually fail. Market fundamentalism, for example, is dead and buried. Economic liberalism has also failed. So too have Keynesianism and Monetarism. Few believe in the universal benefits of the so-called free market, free trade and global capitalism. Everywhere you look in the world it is a social and economic mess.

Socialists are not alone in viewing capitalism in this way. A few years ago the FINANCIALTIMES carried a series “*Capitalism in crisis*”. Not an economic crisis – that had just passed – but a crisis of political legitimacy and support. One of the contributors, John Plender, railed against the enrichment of bankers, corporate chiefs, flash traders and their cronies. However he did not attack the capitalist class. He did not question commodity production and exchange for profit.

Four years later the Governor of the Bank of England now talked of a “*lost generation*” of workers. (BBC NEWS 5th December 2015). In the recent lecture he gave at Liverpool’s John Moore’s University he said that real incomes in Britain had taken the biggest fall since the 1860s when Marx was “*scribbling away in the British Museum*” and that “*globalisation*” is now associated with “*low wages, insecure unemployment, stateless corporations and striking inequalities*”. Carney’s lecture was supposed to be a warning from history. In 1867, Marx published, in German, the first volume of CAPITAL.

And Carney is right to be worried at the state of capitalism. In Italy, for example, 40% of young workers are unemployed and 25% youth unemployment in France. 20.5 million workers are currently unemployed in the EU as a whole (Eurostat October 2016). Greece, under the imposition of austerity measures by the European Bank, has been told to introduce even more cuts, forcing more and more workers into abject poverty. The New Order which was supposed to come out of the end of the Cold War has only delivered for the rich. What if unemployed workers filled their time with reading Marx and taking part in socialist politics?

Is there an alternative? Workers are continually told that there is no alternative to the forward march of free trade and free markets.

However, the reactionary right, under the guise of a populist appeal, are offering the working class an alternative: petty nationalism, xenophobia, and anti-immigration. This is no alternative at all. The only sensible alternative to capitalism, free market or otherwise, is socialism.

Socialists do have a practical and rational alternative to capitalism. We do have statistics and reason on our side. We are not dependent for the success of our socialist case against capitalism on a popularist appeal but on the use of sober senses. And the socialist objective to capitalism can be summed up as the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society.

Capitalism has developed technology and social production to the point where enough goods and services can be produced to meet the needs of all society.

The development of what Marx called the forces of production – which include social and co-operative labour – is the material basis for socialism. Socialism is a practical and realisable alternative to capitalism. Socialism is only “*utopian*” in the sense that socialism has never existed and does not exist anywhere in the world. Russia, Cuba, China, Vietnam and other similar countries were and are all examples of state capitalism and the class exploitation of the working class.

Capitalism cannot make full use of the world-wide productive system because of its division into competing nation states and the profit motive. Trade competition and producing only if there is a profit to be made does not utilise the full potential of the forces of production. In fact, capitalism holds back the potential to producing abundance and meeting the needs of everyone.

Socialism will not be constrained by competition between nation states and production for profit. In socialism men and women will be producing wealth solely to meet their needs not constrained by the process of commodity production and exchange for profit.

In socialism there will be no employers and employed, no labour market, no buying and selling of a worker’s ability to work. In place of capitalism, with its classes and class conflict, we shall have: “*an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all*” (COMMUNIST MANIFESTO).

The only way of establishing socialism is by the formation of a politically conscious socialist majority from the working class. A socialist movement should not only be united but without leaders. Socialists have to think for themselves.

They have to understand capitalism and reject the profit system. Socialists have to stand on their own two feet. Socialism has to be a conscious choice not imposed or swayed by emotion or leaders.

As Marx stated, the socialist movement has to be “*the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority in the interest of the immense majority*” (COMMUNIST MANIFESTO) or it is nothing. The socialist movement must be a class “*for itself*”, knowing what political direction to take and how to establish socialism.

And to establish socialism requires the revolutionary use of the vote. It means sending socialist delegates, not representatives, to parliament. It means capturing the machinery of government including the armed forces so as to ensure the smooth transformation of production for profit to production for social use.

An important problem socialists do face is other political parties who misleadingly call themselves “*socialist*” and their reform policies “*socialism*”. Socialism means a completely different social system to capitalism or it means nothing at all. Socialism means a classless, wageless society of free men and women. Free from class exploitation and free to use the means of production and distribution to meet the needs of all society.

Socialists reject the claim that Jeremy Corbyn has a “*socialist vision*”. Corbyn has no vision beyond retaining capitalism. The Labour Party has never been, is not and never will be a socialist party. It has supported capitalism’s wars and supported the capitalist class in the exploitation of the working class. Their entire reformist policy to address the fundamental problems facing workers has been an abject failure.

The “*left-wing*” parties like the SWP, Counterfire and the Socialist Party can only offer the working class state capitalism and dictatorship of a minority over the majority. The Greens also support capitalism and class exploitation. The so-called Socialist Party in France is not socialist and pursues anti-working class policies. The Social Democrat parties in Europe are not socialist but their failure has opened the door, not to a genuine socialist alternative to capitalism, but to right-wing populism with a darker authoritarian politics in the background.

For the best part of a hundred years a bogus ‘*socialism*’ based on social reforms and regulating the economy has squeezed out the socialist case that capitalism cannot be run in the interest of the working class; those who are forced to live on a wage or salary.

Let us make these points quite clear. Socialism has nothing to do with overhauling the financial sector. Socialism has nothing to do with meritocracy.

Socialism has nothing to do with making capitalism more efficient and the working class more productive. And it has nothing to do with nationalisation.

This bogus “*socialism*” has unsuccessfully tried to retain capitalism through regulating its worst excesses. It has failed. Capitalism cannot become anything but what it already is: a rapacious system of class exploitation, environmental degradation with the never-ending search for profit.

The socialist movement should be a united world-wide movement with no divisions of geography, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. World socialism has to replace world capitalism, And this requires working class solidarity not division and blaming each other for the short-comings of the profit system. Only socialism can create the conditions for equality, comfort and freedom.

## *SOCIALIST THEORY AND PRINCIPLES*

*The Socialist Party of Great Britain has made a number of unique contributions to socialist theory either clarifying or going beyond some of the theories of socialist pioneers like Marx and Engels. Here are seven of the contributions, in no particular order:*

*First, resolving the “Reform or Revolution?” question by declaring that a socialist party does not advocate reforms of capitalism.*

*Second, recognising that political democracy can be used for revolutionary ends.*

*Third, that socialism will be a world-wide social system without national boundaries or a federation of countries.*

*Fourth, the rejection of any need for a “transitional” period between capitalism and socialism. Production and distribution directly to meet human needs can be immediately undertaken by society once a socialist majority has established socialism.*

*Fifth, the recognition that capitalism will not collapse of its own accord, but will continue from one economic crisis to the next until the working class consciously politically and democratically organises to abolish the profit system.*

*Sixth, opposing all wars under capitalism as not being fought in the interest of the working class. Furthermore, recognising that there were no “progressive wars” of freedom and liberation bringing socialism any closer. And Seventh, the rejection of the political concept of leadership. The socialist revolution must involve the active and conscious participation of a majority of workers without the need for leaders no matter how well meaning.*

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## From “Victoria” to “I, Daniel Blake”

The film director, Ken Loach, did not like ITV’s costume drama series, Victoria. He saw it as bread and circus porn for the proles on a Sunday evening. He said

*It’s bad history, bad drama. It puts your brain to sleep. It’s the opposite of what a good broadcaster should do, which is stimulate and invigorate.*

*You might as well take a Mogadon as watch it. TV drama is like the picture on the Quality Street tin, but with less quality and nothing of the street.*  
(RADIO TIMES, 30th July 2016)

Yet for all its soporific qualities, the writers of VICTORIA inserted a historical passage dealing with the Chartists and the Newport Uprising. The Newport Uprising was the last large-scale armed rebellion in the UK. It was also the largest civil massacre committed by the British government during the 19th century.

On 4 November 1839, almost 10,000 Chartist sympathisers, led by John Frost, marched on the town of Newport, Monmouthshire. They were trying to release arrested Chartists who were being held in the town’s Westgate Hotel. About 22 demonstrators were killed when troops opened fire on them.

The leaders of the uprising were arrested, tried for treason and sentenced to be hung, drawn and quartered. Queen Victoria, apparently, was not amused to see such acts of barbarism carried out in her name and the convicts were packed-off, instead, to Australia. There was not a dry-eye in the house at this act of compassion; at least from those who were still awake after a half a bottle of Gigondes.

What was not commented on in VICTORIA was the reason for the Chartists, their political aim and why this was one of the first political working class movements. The working class showed that they could organise politically and go beyond trade union action for higher wages and better working conditions.

So what would Ken Loach put in the place of VICTORIA to awaken the proles from their slumber? Films of social outrage like I, DANIEL BLAKE, no doubt.

Ken Loach’s latest Palme d’Or winner is about today’s benefits system symbolised as the new work-house for the age of austerity with its reinvention of the Victorian “undeserving poor”, food banks and humiliating tests and procedures for claimants. The film critic, Mark Kermode said the film was “neoliberal 1984 meets uncaring capitalist Catch-22” (OBSERVER 21st October 2016). Although, when has capitalism ever been caring? Capitalism is a system of class exploitation.



I, DANIEL BLAKE, set in Newcastle, is an angry denouncement of attacks on the weak and the vulnerable; in frame after frame, in scene after scene, Loach shows the squalor and cruelty of contemporary capitalism and its brutal treatment of the working class on par with previous films of his like POOR COW and CATHY COME HOME.

I, DANIEL BLAKE is a film about the hardship endured by a fictional benefits claimant called Daniel Blake (Dave Johns), the type of claimant the DAILY MAIL and the SUN love to hate. He is a skilled labourer and carpenter in Newcastle who is unable to work because he has had a heart attack. Daniel also meets Katie (Hayley Squires), a single mother newly rehoused from London as part of social cleansing of the poor from areas of the City ripe for redevelopment for the rich.

The film follows Daniel Blake, through the tortuous and bureaucratic claimant's system where he finds out he is ineligible for sickness benefit. In particular, Daniel has to spend more than 30 hours a week applying for jobs he can't take in order to qualify for support. "*Tough love*" the Tories called it.

I, DANIEL BLAKE is perhaps a film not for Sunday evening viewing. However it is a film with something more to say than the escapism of VICTORIA. Yet what the film has to say needs to be questioned and what the film does not say needs to be brought to the surface.

The film is a plea for social reform and "*social justice*" not socialism. It is a film for Corbyn's Labour Party and Loach's Left Unity. It is a nostalgic plea for a return to 1945 and the Attlee government as that had anything to do with socialism.

Loach's politics advocates a "*caring sharing capitalism*" rather than the brutal austerity and poverty we live under today. However, this is a utopian view of the world. You cannot establish a "*caring, sharing capitalism*". The capitalist class own the means of production and distribution to the exclusion of the rest of the family and this is the point where the social problems flow out into the working class.

Capitalism is as unpleasant as it is exploitive. In economic depressions the squeeze is always put on the working class whether it is lower wages or cuts in social services. The political question "*what to do about it?*" would be answered by Ken Loach: "*Vote Labour*". This is no answer at all. In a trade depression a Labour Government would not have behaved any differently from the Tories.

So what is unsaid in the film I, DANIEL BLAKE?

First, there is no socialist critique of capitalism. There is no socialist argument against the widely held belief that workers will always have to endure wage slavery and periodic unemployment. Second, Loach's career as a film director and political activist may have produced films highlighting the effects of capitalism but he has never set out a socialist political programme to abolish the capitalist cause.

Loach's historic film, CATHY COME HOME, drew attention to the appalling housing crisis of that time. And here we are, decades later, and we have a worse problem of homelessness than in the 1960's. And in response to the housing crisis the government is considering "*micro-flats*", to be built for the working class – the slums of the future. Workers are told by government ministers to lower their standards and be prepared to rent housing with lesser standards.

Loach naively clings to the belief in social reformism instead of socialist revolution. At the end of I, DANIEL BLAKE there is a plea for compassion in economic policy. What should have been stated at the end of the film, loud and clear, is the urgent necessity for the working class to consciously and politically abolish capitalism and establish socialism.

However the characters in the film are passive and resigned to the system that exploits and humiliates them. There is no hope or scope for revolutionary change. The film is just one long visual GUARDIAN editorial moaning about the social problems thrown up by capitalism but unable or incapable of suggesting a socialist

In this respect, I, DANIEL BLAKE, despite the social problems the film highlights in great detail, is as reactionary and conservative as VICTORIA. Not because the film is like a picture on a tin of Quality Street but because politically the film and its politics changes nothing.

## HARDY ON CANNAN & FREE TRADE

*Edwin Cannan held that, in the abstract, the free-trader's argument is unanswerable. If everyone and every country bought in the cheapest market the world would be much richer; but Cannan knew very well that capitalists are not in business to make the world richer, or any country richer. It is their own profit they are concerned with. August 1990*

*The richest 1% now has as much wealth as the rest of the world combine.  
(Oxfam, 18th January 2016).*

*The bottom 50% of the world owned less than 1% of all wealth.  
(Credit Suisse Report 2016).*

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# A Question of Class

Ever since socialism became a political problem for the ruling class from about the early 1830's with the Ricardian Socialists, there has been a continuous and sustained attack by politicians, academics and the media against socialists in order to avoid the issue of class, class interest and class struggle.

The Marxian concept of class, for example, has been increasingly and deliberately overshadowed in recent years by identity politics. Studies in gender, sex, disability and race have supposedly located political power elsewhere in society away from the class ownership of the means of production and distribution.

This is all very convenient for the interests of the capitalist class; a class who actually owns the means of production and distribution. And as a result the capitalist class, has largely disappeared from view.

Yes, the rich are shown indulging in privilege and luxury, gorging themselves from the trough of surplus value or appearing on numerous television game shows like THE HIDDEN MILLIONAIRE, THE APPRENTICE and DRAGON'S DEN but they are all depicted as individuals; usually known by the weasely word “*entrepreneurs*”.

What you will not find is the capitalist class being referred to as a definite minority class with diametrically opposed interests to the working class majority. When do you see the expression capitalist class used in the media?

The media might castigate Philip Green or Donald Trump for their greed, vulgarity and unpleasantness, but they will not say anything at all about the class they belong to, what this class does and who sustains it. Workers are never told that the capitalist class exploits the working class within the productive process by paying them less in wages and salaries than the social wealth they actually produce.

In fact, outside socialist circles, hardly any reference is made to the capitalist class at all; it appears that the capitalist class wears Perseus's magic cap of invisibility, exploiting the world's working class as though it cannot be seen and named. When capitalists are depicted in the media it is either as cartoon figures like Mr Burns from THE SIMPSONS or someone pictured from an old Stalin-era Soviet poster, faintly Semitic, wearing a top hat and white bow tie with a large dollar sign pinned to his jacket –and it is always a white heterosexual male!

Identity politics steers clear of class and class power, pretending it does not exist.

As for the capitalist class - “*the personification of capital*” - the *dramatis personae* found in the pages of Marx's CAPITAL, there is no sign of this class anywhere.

A journalist like Owen Jones of THE INDEPENDENT can write an entire book on the demonization of the working class but makes no reference to the capitalist class whatsoever (CHAVS, Verso 2012).

As for the class struggle, defenders of capitalism refuse to accept it exists. The late Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher once remarked:

*Class is a Communist concept. It groups people as bundles and sets them against one another.*  
(quoted in Hugo Young, ONE OF US 1990, p.127)

There have been those, like Thatcher, who claimed Marx invented the class struggle. He did no such thing.

In his March 5, 1852 letter to J. Weydemeyer, Marx wrote:

*Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes.*

In a letter to Engels Marx to Engels, called the French historian Thierry “*the father of the class struggle*” of French historiography although Marx notes that Thierry does not want to extend the class struggle to the “*bourgeoisie*” and “*proletariat*,/I>

”: *...It is remarkable how indignant this gentleman—the father of the ‘class struggle’ in French historiography—waxes in his preface at the ‘new people,’ who now see an antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and who claim to detect traces of this antagonism even in the history of the third estate before 1789. He is at great pains to prove that the third estate includes all social ranks and estates except the nobility and clergy, and that the bourgeoisie plays its part as the representative of all these other elements*  
(July 27, 1854 SELECTED CORRESPONDENCE p. 87).

And in another letter to Engels, Marx said:

*No credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society, nor yet the struggle between them.”*  
*”What I did that was new was to prove: 1) that **the existence of classes** is only bound up with **particular historical phases in the development of production**, 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the **dictatorship of the proletariat**, 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the **abolition of all classes and to a classless society***

. Later, Marx’s friend Frederick Engels openly acknowledged the debt he and Marx owed to earlier bourgeois theorists like Thierry, Mignet, Guizot and others, who had begun tentatively to sketch out a materialist theory of history informed by the class struggle.

In a letter to H. Starkenburg, written in 1894, Engels explained:

*While Marx discovered the materialist conception of history, Thierry, Mignet, Guizot and all the English historians up to 1850 are evidence that it was being striven for, and the discovery of the same conception by Morgan proves that the time was ripe for it and that it simply had to be discovered.*

Although the words class and class struggle are politically embarrassing, not to be used today in polite society, this has not always been the case, particularly in political economy, or what is now known as economics.

David Ricardo, for example, used the concept of class in his book PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY AND TAXATION (1817) and received due praise from Marx for doing so. In Ricardo's model of the economy the interests of landowners directly oppose those of society in general.

This led Marx to comment that:

*closely bound up with this scientific merit is the fact that Ricardo exposes and describes the economic contradiction between the classes—as shown by the intrinsic relations—and that consequently political economy perceives, discovers the root of the historical struggle and development* (THEORIES OF SURPLUS VALUE.)

The political danger presented to economics in particular and to capitalism in general by the Marxian concept of class was not lost on the capitalists and their politicians and economists. More so when class, class interest and class struggle were coupled with Marx's theory of history and labour theory of value to present a formable critique of political economy. Marx exposed the contradictions at the heart of capitalist production which generate the class struggle and periodic economic crises. Marx's three interrelated theories were useful for socialists to explain to the working class the origin of profit and the distribution of social wealth under capitalism. Earned income went as wages and salaries to the working class and unearned income in the form of rent, interest and profit passed on to the capitalist class. Furthermore, the Marxian analysis of capitalism demonstrated why the class struggle took place, why capitalism is a transient historical system which has long exhausted its social and historical usefulness and why the working class should act in its own interests to replace capitalism with Socialism.

After Marx's death, the so-called neo-classical school of Mengers, Jevons, Walras, Marshall and others, tried to eliminate class conflict from its analysis of capitalism.

These economists opted for a superficial and apologetic analysis of the economy as opposed to Marx's scientific critique of political economy which had shown the reality of commodity production and exchange for profit. Capitalism's economists put forward, *contra* Marx, a vulgar theory of economics justifying the harmonious relationship between the three factors of production; labour (wages), capital (interest) and land (rent). It was, of course, a complete fiction. Land is inert; capital is just a social relationship masquerading as a thing.

Class analysis was banished from economics to the Cinderella world of sociology. Sociology, from Weber, Durkheim, on up to Anthony Giddens and the Third Way dogma of New Labour, replaced class conflict with class harmony where each social class lived in peaceful co-existence with another in a series of passive alphabetical gradations. There was no talk of the class struggle being the "*motor force of history*".

The Marxian objective of a classless society was repudiated by successive generations of sociologists in favour of social policies announcing the creation of a "*meritocracy*" in which those who failed only had themselves to blame. We were told of the existence of "*middle-class*" who aspired, nothing more, than to consume more and more commodities and mimic, as best they could, the life-style of the ruling class as portrayed by the advertising industry and Sunday newspaper magazines. While, conveniently, there was social harmony between capital and labour where any form of revolutionary political dissent was written off as irrational and psychotic.

With class analysis banished from economics, economists could pursue their fictional account of capitalism. Class relations, class interest, class struggle were replaced by the superficial relationship between buyers and sellers; the mathematical sophistry of supply and demand curves, the consumer as king and the myth of natural scarcity and infinite wants. However, capital is not a "*thing*" but a social relationship—while land is inert. A theory of class harmony may have been pleasing to the ears of those paying professional economists and sociologists to serve their class interests but it meant that without a labour theory of value economists could not explain capitalism, particularly the trade cycle, economic crises and depressions and periodic high levels of unemployment. Marx had already described this bogus "*class harmony*" long before it had been encoded in the economic text books of the economic world as:

*"...an enchanted, perverted, topsy-turvy world, in which Monsieur le Capital and Madame la Terre do their ghost-walking as social characters and at the same time directly as mere things"*

(For a detailed critique of the apologetic *Trinity Formula* see CAPITAL VOLUME III The Trinity Formula, Ch. XLVIII)

The existence of capitalism as a social system based on the class ownership of the means of production and distribution and the subsequent exploitation by capitalists of the working class leads to an irreconcilable conflict of interest between employers and workers. The class struggle, on the economic field, despite periods of success for Trade Unions in gaining higher pay and better working conditions, always favours the capitalist class, not only

because they own the means to life but because the capitalists have their interests defended by capitalist politicians and their property protected by the machinery of government, including the armed forces.

The class struggle, as Marx stated, in the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, is, in fact, a **political struggle** and is the important reason why workers must consciously and politically organise within a socialist party to replace capitalism with Socialism. Those who have fallen into the trap of discarding class, class relationships and class struggle from socialist discourse and from the analysis and critique of capitalism have reduced scientific socialism to an anaemic propaganda conceding Marx's important concept of class to our political opponents.

The working class has been replaced by working people, definite social relationship to the means of production have been replaced by passive consumerism and capitalists are referred to as the either “*the rich*” or as bankers, financiers and hedge fund managers to be found gambling on the derivative markets in the City. As a consequence, class loses its scientific meaning along with an understanding of capitalism as a transient social system of class exploitation while the working class is dismissed as being the unique political agency of revolutionary change. Words are important because they define and inform politics and a socialist politics is a class politics or it is nothing.

## CHAOS AND CALIPHATE

*Patrick Cockburn, the Independent's Middle East correspondent has just published a book on the wars and chaos in the Middle East since the end of the First Gulf War. The book is not a happy read. Here is one passage which highlights the misery millions men and women have and are living in the world today.*

*“It is probably the most dangerous way to make a living in the world. “I do it because I would prefer to die than see the rest of my family starve,” says Sabir Saleh, a middle-aged man who used to be a farmer but is now too poor to hire a tractor to plough his land. Every morning he goes out into the minefield laid around Penjwin, a Kurdish village in Northern Iraq shattered by fighting in the Iran-Iraq War. Saleh looks for one mine in particular: the Italian-made Valmara, one of the most lethal anti-personnel mines in existence. It is not easy to spot, because its five khaki-coloured prongs look like dried grass. Pressure on any one of them causes the Valmara to jump to waist height and explode, spraying 1,200 ball bearings over a range of 100 yards.*

*“I defuse the mine with a piece of wire,” says Saleh. “Then I unscrew the top of it and take out the aluminium around the explosives. When I have taken apart six mines I have enough aluminium to sell for 30 dinar (about 75 pence) to a shop in Penjwin”. After a day in the minefields he hopes to have recovered enough aluminium to feed his family of eight”*  
(CHAOS AND THE CALIPHATE, Patrick Cockburn, Chapter 3, p. 45, OR Books 2016).

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# The Coming War on China

THE COMING WAR ON CHINA (2016) is a documentary film by the journalist and writer, John Pilger on the increasing military tension in the South Seas, between the US and China, both of whom are nuclear-armed.

The documentary charts the rise of China as an economic power which is seen by the US as a threat to their world domination as the only global super-power. In 2011, to counter China's expansion in the South Seas, President Obama announced a “*pivot to Asia*” policy which meant that almost two-thirds of US naval forces would be transferred to Asia and the Pacific by 2020. Today, there are more than 400 US military bases encircling China with missiles, bombers, warships and nuclear weapons.

In 2015, the Pentagon released its *Law of War Manual*. The Manual stated that the “*US has not accepted a treaty rule that prohibits the use of nuclear weapons per se, and thus nuclear weapons are lawful weapons for the United States.*” Obama's administration has committed to spend 1 trillion dollars on nuclear weapons over the next several decades.



As with Pilger's other works on US Imperialism, he erroneously believes the US is the embodiment of all evil, while China, like Russia before it, was really the good guy who just wanted a peaceful way of life. Although he does touch on the massacre of Tiananmen Square in 1989 and the political repression that exists in China today, he treats China's push for world domination as of secondary importance to the US. He says little about the military expansion of the Chinese navy and the vast sums of money the Chinese government is currently pumping into its military, which increased by 6-7% in 2016.

All capitalist countries prepare for war. All capitalist countries will engage in war to either protect their trade routes and spheres of strategic importance or to take other countries resources, like oil. China, in this respect, is no different to the US. Pilger's film lacks balance in that he should have been equally critical of Chinese capitalism and its global ambitions as he was with the US.

One tragic episode highlighted in the documentary, was the consequence of the 23 nuclear devices which were exploded in the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands and in the 1950's and early 1960's. The US got the Bikini swimwear in a celebration of the H-Bomb tests while nearby islanders got leukaemia and other cancers associated with radiation. Unless socialism is established as a matter of urgency by a world socialist majority, "*the coming war on China*" will cause greater death and destruction than befell the islanders living near the Bikini Atoll.

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## The Russian Revolution and the SPGB

Throughout 2017 we will be reproducing articles written in the SOCIALIST STANDARD relating to the Russian Revolution and the subsequent coup d'état by the Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky.

The first article, A RUSSIAN CHALLENGE was published before the revolution in March, 1915. The article was in fact written by the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks) who had opposed the First World War but had not been invited to attend a conference called by other Social Democratic Parties whose countries were then at war with Germany.

In the 1948 Preface to the pamphlet RUSSIA SINCE 1917: SOCIALIST VIEWS OF BOLSHEVIK POLICY (1948) from which this article is taken from, the Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, stated that the statement had been reproduced to show that the hostility of the SPGB towards the Bolsheviks was not "*the outcome of prejudice; we were at all times ready to give them credit when their actions were in line with the interests of the working class*" (p.3). And opposing capitalism's war of 1914 was just such an example.

### Russian Challenge (SOCIALIST STANDARD March, 1915)

*We have received the following and publish it in order to show the trickery resorted to by the pseudo-Socialists responsible for the London Conference in endeavouring to exploit the Russian Socialists, whose challenge they dared not face.*

#### A DECLARATION TO THE LONDON CONFERENCE

Citizens, - Your Conference calls itself a conference of the Socialist parties of the allied belligerent countries, Belgium, England, France and Russia.

Allow me first of all to draw your attention to the fact that the Social-Democracy of Russia, as an organised body, as represented by its Central Committee and affiliated to the International Socialist Bureau, has received no invitation from you. The Russian Social-Democracy, whose views have been expressed by the members of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Group in the Duma, now arrested by the Tsar's Government (Petrovski, Muranoff, Badaoff,

Samoiloff representing the workers of Petrograd, Yokaterinoslaff, Kharkoff, Kastroma and Vladimir districts) have nothing in common with your conference. We hope that you will state so publicly, as otherwise you may be accused of distorting the truth.

Now allow me to say a few words with regard your conference, i.e., to tell you what the class-conscious Social Democratic workers of Russia would expect of you.

We believe that before entering upon any deliberations with regard to the reconstruction of the International, before attempting to restore international bonds between Socialist workers, it is our Socialist duty to demand:

- (1) That Vandervelde, Guesde and Sembat immediately leave the Belgian and French bourgeoisie ministries
- (2) That the Belgian and French Socialist parties break-up the so-called "bloc national" which is a disgrace to the Socialist flag and under cover of which the bourgeoisie celebrates its orgies of chauvinism.
- (3) That all socialist parties cease their policy of ignoring the crimes of Russian Tsarism and renew their support of that struggle against Tsarism which is being carried on by the Russian workers in spite of all sacrifices they have to make.
- (4) That in fulfilment of the resolutions of the Ba(s)le conference we hold out our hands to those revolutionary Social-Democrats of Germany and Austria who are prepared to carry on propaganda for revolutionary action as a reply to war. The voting of war credits must be condemned without any reserves.

The German and Austrian Social-Democrats have committed a monstrous crime against Socialism and the International by voting war credits and entering into a domestic truce with the Junkers, the priests and the bourgeoisie, but the action of the Belgian and French Socialists has by no means been better. We fully understand that conditions are possible when Socialists as a minority have to submit to a bourgeois majority, but under no circumstances should Socialists cease to be Socialists or join in the chorus of bourgeois chauvinism forsake the workers' cause and enter bourgeois ministries.

The German and Austrian Social-Democrats are committing a great crime against Socialism when, after the example of the bourgeoisie they hypocritically assert that the Hohen- zollerns and the Hapsburgs are carrying on a war of liberation "*against Tsarism*".

But those are committing a crime no less stupendous who assert that Tsarism is becoming democratised and civilised, who are passing over in silence the fact that Tsarism is strangling and ruining unhappy Galicia just as the German Kaiser is strangling and ruining Belgium, who keep silent about the facts that the Tsar's gang has thrown into gaol the parliamentary representatives of the Russian working class, and only the other day condemned to six years penal servitude a number of Moscow workers for the only offence of belonging to our Party, that Tsarism is now oppressing Finland worse than ever, that our Labour press and organisations in Russia are suppressed, that all the milliards necessary for the war are being wrung by the Tsar's clique out of the poor workers and starving peasants.

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

M. MAXIMOVICH

(*"M. Maximovich" who signed the statement is Max Maximovich Litvonoff, Commissar for Foreign Affairs 1930-1939.*)

## *WHAT SOCIALISM MEANS*

*Socialism is the only system within which the problems which now face the workers can be solved; but what will it be like? Socialism is a system in which the means for producing and distributing wealth will be owned by society as a whole. Under capitalism the land, factories, offices, mines, railways and other instruments of production are*

*monopolised by a section of society only., who this form a privileged class. Socialism will end this, for, with the means of life owned in common by the entire community it will be a classless society in which the exploitation and oppression of man by man will have been abolished. All human beings will be social equals, free to run social affairs as they think fit.*

*Today we cannot describe in detail daily life in a socialist society. Some writers have tried to paint a picture of what life could, or should be like, but it is a matter of opinion how successful they were. Drawing up a detailed blueprint for socialism is premature, since the exact forms will depend upon the technical conditions and preferences of those who set up and live in socialism. The socialist Party of Great Britain has always refused to play the futile game of constructing blue-prints of future society but we can broadly define the essential features of socialism.*

*Questions of the Day: Socialist Party of Great Britain, 1978 p. 5*

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# Object and Declaration of Principles

## Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

## Declaration of Principles

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN HOLDS:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (ie land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.
7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class

emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

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